

# SLAVE MARKET OF SIN

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## *Preface*

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Before you begin your Bible study, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, be sure you have named your sins privately to God the Father.

If we confess our [known] sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our [known] sins and to cleanse us from all [unknown, or forgotten sins] unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

You will then be in fellowship with God, filled with the Holy Spirit, and ready to learn Bible doctrine from the Word of God.

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in [the filling of the] spirit and [biblical] truth.” (John 4:24)

If you have never personally believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, the issue is not naming your sins. The issue is faith alone in Christ alone.

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey [the command to believe in] the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)

**T**HE WORD OF GOD is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. 4:12)

All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God might be mature, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3:16–17)

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15)

## INTRODUCTION

SLAVE TRAFFICKING was a thriving enterprise throughout the ancient world. Merchants prospered by bartering in humanity (Ezek. 27:13). Human beings were chattel with a market value. As the exclusive property of their masters, slaves were denied all control over their own lives. In Rome the practice reached institutional status.

From the third century B.C. onward, slaves flowed into Rome from all quarters, predominantly as plunder from victorious conquest. Nearly half a million came from Caesar's Gallic Wars alone.<sup>1</sup> To handle the sheer volume, immense slave markets were established. Sold in overwhelming numbers like beasts of burden, many lived a wretched existence under cruel masters.

The Bible documents the existence of this barbaric condition and describes how the institution was perpetuated in the ancient world. A father could sell his son or daughter into slavery (Ex. 21:7; Deut. 15:12). When a man died in debt, his family could be taken into bondage by his creditors (2 Kings 4:1). Enslavement was the punishment

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1. Michael Grant, *The World of Rome* (New York: Mentor Books, 1960), 130–31.

for the specific crime of housebreaking (Ex. 22:3). Slaves were the spoils of war (Deut. 20:10–18). The children of slaves were *born* into human bondage, the same brutal and defenseless circumstance suffered by their parents. With little hope for freedom, they were destined to live and possibly to die as slaves.<sup>2</sup>

Today, we think of ourselves as free, but we are *born* into an inescapable slavery—bondage to sin. As members of the human race we exist in a slave market of sin, helpless to redeem ourselves. We enter the world with a sin nature, separated from God and powerless to establish a relationship with Him. We have no way to emancipate ourselves from the captivity of our inherited depravity. But the gracious plan of God for mankind calls for a savior, a redeemer—the Lord Jesus Christ—to purchase our freedom from the slave market of sin.

## THE GODHEAD

Who is the God that purchases our freedom? He is one God (Deut. 6:4) existing in three separate and distinct personalities—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Whenever God is portrayed by the Scripture as being one, that always refers to the same perfect essence inherent in all three members of the Godhead.<sup>3</sup>

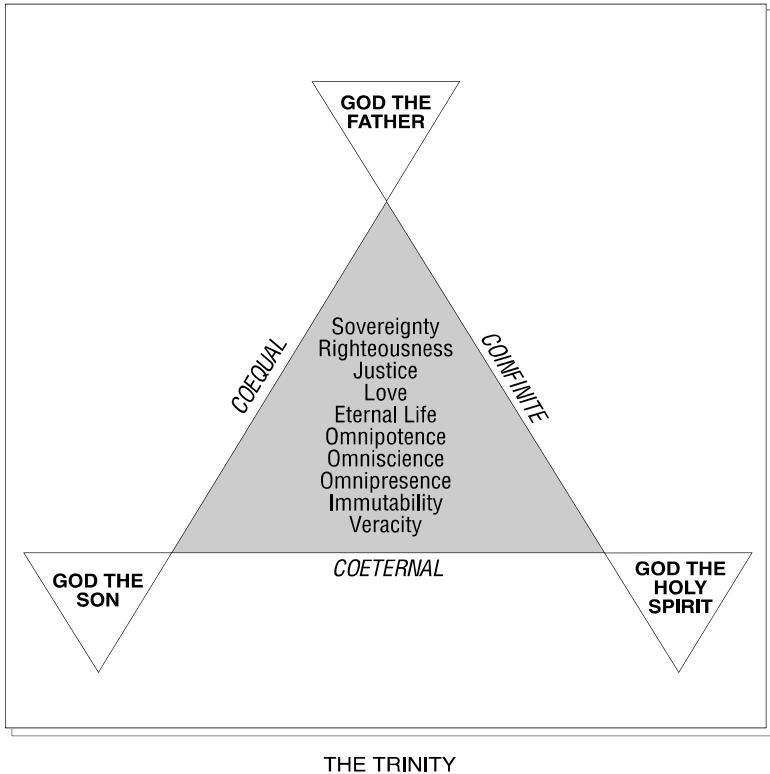
Each person of the Godhead executes a different aspect of the divine plan for the liberation of mankind. The Father is the author of the redemptive plan; the Son is the executor of the plan, our redeemer by virtue of His work on the cross; and the Holy Spirit is the revealer of the plan, the person through whom the power of redemption is conveyed. Therefore, God is *one* in essence but *three* in personality.

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2. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), s.v. "Slavery," by S. S. Bartchy.

3. Essence defines the nature of a person, what that person is. See R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Trinity* (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2003, 5–19). Hereafter, cross-references to my books will cite only author, title, date of publication (in the first reference), and page(s).





### *The Conference in Eternity Past*

In eternity past the three members of the Godhead held a conference to authorize the redemptive plan. The divine decree was established (Acts 2:23; Eph. 1:4, 11; 3:11; 1 Pet. 1:2)<sup>4</sup> by the omniscience of the Godhead who knew simultaneously all the knowable. There never was a time when God did not comprehend everything. He knew that the first man, Adam, would make the decision to sin dooming the entire human race to the slave market of sin.

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4. Thieme, *The Integrity of God* (2005), 296–327.

Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and [spiritual] death through sin, and so death spread to all men [passed on to the progeny of Adam], because all sinned [in Adam]. (Rom. 5:12)<sup>5</sup>

God looked down the corridors of time and saw every human being born spiritually dead, enslaved to his sin nature, with no hope, separated from God and destined for eternal condemnation. God's plan would offer man a choice—the alternative between eternal condemnation and eternal life, between slavery and freedom.

### *The Plan*

God's gracious plan for spiritual freedom includes three phases.<sup>6</sup> Phase one, salvation, was provided by God the Son, Jesus Christ. Born of a virgin, He was undiminished deity and true humanity united in one person forever (Phil. 2:5–11). He lived a perfect, sinless life that culminated with His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. For those who believe in Jesus Christ by faith alone, there is no eternal condemnation, only spiritual freedom (Rom. 6:17–18) and eternal life (John 3:36).

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten [uniquely born] Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Phase two, designed for the believer in time, begins at the moment of salvation and continues throughout his earthly life. God the Holy Spirit indwells and fills every Church Age believer for the purpose of empowerment, spiritual growth, and the production of divine good.<sup>7</sup>

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5. All Scriptures in this book are quoted from the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB). Bracketed commentary reflects amplification of the NASB translation taught in Bible class lectures (available on MP3 CD from R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, Houston, Texas).

6. Thieme, *The Plan of God* (2003).

7. The indwelling of the Spirit provides a permanent relationship with God after salvation (1 Cor. 3:16). The filling of the Spirit is temporary fellowship determined by our carnality or spirituality. When we have sinned we recover the status of filling only by utilizing the

Phase three, designed for the believer in eternity, begins when the believer dies and comes face to face with the Lord. The believer in Jesus Christ has traveled from the slave market to the palace (John 14:2). Heaven will be wonderful beyond description (Rev. 21—22).

### THE HUMAN DILEMMA

In the beginning the first man and woman were created perfect without sin or the sin nature.<sup>8</sup> For an unknown period of time they enjoyed fellowship with God in the Garden. What caused them to become alienated from God (Eph. 4:18)? Their sin of disobedience to God's expressed will (Gen. 2:17; 3:6). Their negative volition toward God's command produced the sin nature and spiritual death that severed their fellowship with God.

After their disobedience Jesus Christ approached Adam and Eve in the Garden. They hid themselves behind a covering of self-righteousness, represented by their apron of fig leaves (Gen. 3:7). Yet they need not have hidden behind this superficial barrier. They were already captives of sin and the penalty of sin—part of a far greater barrier erected between them and God the moment they rebelled. As Adam's progeny we are all born shackled behind the same barrier.<sup>9</sup>

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rebound technique. Divine good is thoughts, words, or deeds accomplished when the believer is filled with the Spirit, under the control of the Holy Spirit. See Thieme, *Rebound and Keep Moving!* (1993), 8, 17–18.

The Church Age began circa A.D. 30 on the day of Pentecost and will terminate on an unknown future date when the Church is resurrected or raptured. See Thieme, *The Divine Outline of History: Dispensations and the Church* (1999), 63–66.

8. The sin nature is an integral part of every human being that resides in the cell structure of the human body. The sin nature was acquired originally by Adam at his fall and is subsequently passed down genetically to all mankind through procreation. The result is both spiritual death and total depravity of all humanity, except Jesus Christ. The sin nature is composed of an area of strength, an area of weakness, trends toward legalism or antinomianism, and lust patterns.

9. Thieme, *The Barrier* (2003).

## THE BARRIER

We are spiritually dead, powerless to approach God on our own. An impassable and insurmountable barrier confines us. From the fall of Adam until the end of time no human being can escape the barrier. Because of Adam's decision to sin, the justice of God erected the barrier—only God can eliminate it. No human effort can release us from our prison. No matter what our abilities, talents, ethics, conduct, assets, or any other factor, we are helpless. We exist behind the barrier, alienated from God. Apart from divine intervention, we all face condemnation and eternal separation from God.

The fact that this barrier exists is bad news. By one act of disobedience, man was trapped behind the barrier and became enslaved to a nature of sin. But through the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross, God opened a way through the barrier to provide freedom from the slave market of sin. This is the Gospel—very good news!

### *Grace Found a Way*

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the *truth*, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6, italics added)

The "truth" is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus says in effect, "When you know Me, I liberate you. You shall be made free." Knowing Jesus Christ begins with

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved." (Acts 16:31a)

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (Eph. 2:8–9)

Grace is God's free gift of unmerited favor—all that God is free to do for mankind on the basis of the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Faith is the nonmeritorious decision to believe in Christ.

The freedom bestowed on a person who believes in Jesus Christ is in marked contrast to the slavery of those who reject Him. The reli-

gious legalists of Israel provide an excellent example of slavery to sin in contrast to freedom in Christ.

### *The Four Enslavements*

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you abide in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31–32)

Jesus was speaking these words to believers when a group of bystanders began arguing with Him. These observers were Pharisees and scribes, members of the religious hierarchy of Israel. They were always harassing our Lord, seizing every opportunity to criticize and malign Him. They could not resist this opportunity for scorn: Jesus was claiming to speak the Word of God (John 8:28*b*). His truth was freedom from the bondage of sin and human viewpoint. The unbelieving Pharisees misunderstood His meaning.

They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You shall become free’?” (John 8:33)

Jesus’ religious antagonists answered with the boast: “We are Abraham’s offspring.” The Pharisees gloated with pride over their lineage. They were haughty about their heritage. Were they not descended from one of the Lord’s greatest servants? Was that not proof enough of their spiritual worthiness?

The Pharisees and scribes were relying on their genetic relationship with Abraham. Surely heaven would never exclude the offspring of Abraham. The next pompous statement reveals their distorted view of reality: “We . . . have never yet been enslaved to anyone.”

At the time they proclaimed this absurdity they were actually under four different systems of slavery:

1. They were enslaved to their own corruption of the Mosaic Law. The Law was never given as a way of salvation (Gal. 2:16), but given to show that man is a sinner and needs a savior.<sup>10</sup> Yet these religious

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10. Thieme, *The Blood of Christ* (2002), 11–14.

- Jews meticulously kept the law for salvation and, consequently, had become enslaved to a system of legalism—salvation by works.
2. They were enslaved to a religious system. Palestine had evolved into a union of Judaism and government—a lethal combination of dogma and politics. All people who refused to conform to the religious system became outcasts. The primary purpose of the Mosaic Law as a freedom code was negated.
  3. They were enslaved to the Roman Empire. As a province of Rome, Judea stood in the shadow of the Roman eagle. The legions of Tiberius marching through the streets of Jerusalem were a constant reminder of their captivity.
  4. And finally, they were in spiritual slavery to sin.

What a tremendous opportunity for the Lord Jesus Christ to discredit the deluded assertion just uttered by these legalists. What about the four hundred years of slavery in Egypt? What about the seventy years of captivity in Babylon? If the Jews had never been in bondage to anyone, how could they explain the Roman legion stationed in Jerusalem?

Most prevalent was the bondage to their own legalism. Consider the Sabbath prohibitions! Under these legalistic restrictions, a barrel that is leaking cannot be plugged, even if the best wine is lost. If someone is stabbed on the Sabbath, his wound cannot be treated and he will most likely bleed to death. No activity is permitted on the Sabbath. Here is complete bondage to religion.

Sabbath restrictions found in the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud*, the books containing the body of Jewish oral law, are extensive and in many cases ludicrous. For example, on the Sabbath a Jew was prohibited from cooking an egg by covering it with hot sand. Apparently people were making attempts to evade the law against cooking on the Sabbath. If you were in a caravan traveling on Friday from one town to another and arrived at your destination just as the sun went down, you could loosen the girth of your mule, but the load on the mule could not be removed unless it fell to the ground. In that case the pack must remain on the ground until the Sabbath ended.

Far from being saved by the Mosaic Law, the Jews were in bondage to the Law; they were in bondage to their religious leaders; they were in bondage to the Roman Empire. Jesus, however, graciously did not mention any of these circumstances. He focused on the main issue—the Gospel. Even though the preliminary to the Gospel is

Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and fall short [missed the mark] of the glory [perfect righteousness] of God,” Jesus did not make an issue of the Pharisees’ personal sins.<sup>11</sup>

If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and desire that others find Christ as Savior, do not emphasize their shortcomings, their bad habits, their failures. You have flaws as well. Never cultivate a ‘holier-than-thou’ attitude. An arrogant, self-righteous believer obscures the primary concern in salvation. The only issue in witnessing is that Jesus Christ died as a substitute for your sins and for my sins.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us [as our substitute]. (Rom. 5:8)<sup>12</sup>

Jesus Christ Himself proved this point when He dealt with these religious unbelievers. He did not talk to them about their bondage to the Roman Empire—a political issue; their relative righteousness—a personal issue; or the Mosaic Law—a religious issue. He could have elaborated extensively on each of these, but instead He spoke of the fundamental bondage of the entire human race—sin.

## THE SOLUTION TO SIN

### *What Is Sin?*

Man is born into this world with three strikes against him: Adam’s original sin is imputed at birth; man inherits the nature to sin; and man commits personal sins. The first personal sin, Adam’s original sin, was imputed or officially charged to the entire human race. Since Adam represented the human race, we stand or fall with him.

For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners. (Rom. 5:19a)

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11. Thieme, *Witnessing* (1992), 16–20.

12. Christ substituted Himself on the cross for our sins (2 Cor. 5:14). “For us” in the Greek is the preposition ὑπέρ (*hyper*), translated “on behalf of” or “as a substitute,” plus the genitive plural of advantage from the pronoun ἐγώ (*ego*). H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1955), 111–12.

Through physical birth, we inherit a sin nature.<sup>13</sup> The volition of Adam is the culprit. Adam disobeyed God in the Garden by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6–8). Adam chose to transgress, thereby acquiring a sin nature that he passed on genetically to all mankind. That is what David meant when he wrote, “I was brought forth in iniquity” (Ps. 51:5). By being born through natural procreation David inherited a sin nature, which made him a sinner.

Consequently, mankind is alienated from God (Gen. 3:2–3; cf. Rom. 5:12). The presence of a sin nature in all members of the human race makes it impossible for anyone to measure up to the perfect righteousness of God.

The sin nature is the source of temptation to personal sin; our volition is the cause of personal sin. Personal sin is disobedience to God and His expressed will—any mental, verbal, or overt activity contrary to the character and standards of God. Sins are always directed against God, even though they may involve wrongdoing against oneself or others (Ps. 51:4). The Bible defines personal sins by means of several synonyms:

1. Falling short (Rom. 3:23)
2. Transgressions—rebellion against or overstepping the Law (Ps. 51:1)
3. Acting unfaithfully—self-will over God’s will (Joshua 22:20)
4. Trespasses (Eph. 2:1)
5. Lawlessness and rebellion—failure in relation to the Mosaic Law (1 Tim. 1:9–10)
6. Unbelief—the only unpardonable sin (John 8:24; 16:9)

In contrast, by means of the virgin birth, Jesus Christ came into the world without imputed sin and without a sin nature. Furthermore, He lived a life free from personal sin in order to qualify as the perfect Redeemer of mankind.

### *Inside the Slave Market*

With the exception of Jesus Christ, every member of the human race is born inside the slave market of sin. Outstanding biblical heroes

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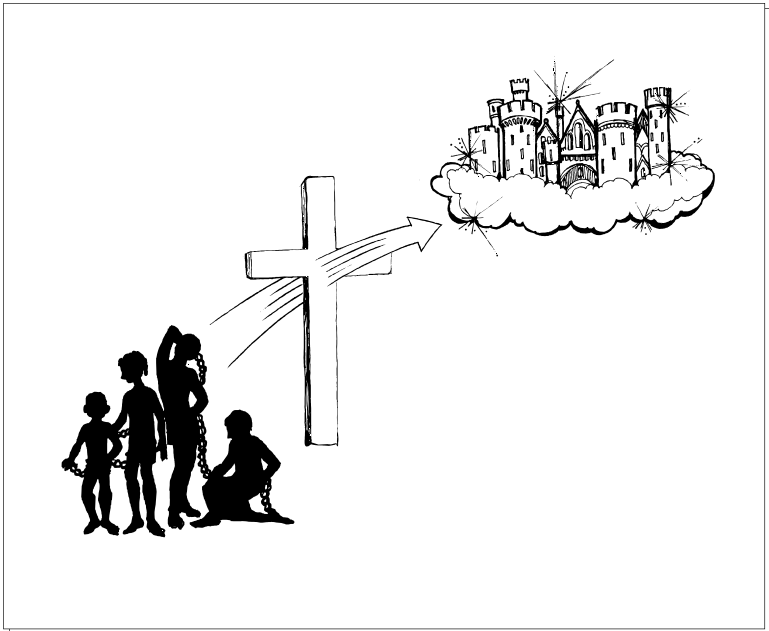
13. The word *sin* generally refers to the sin nature when used in the Scripture as a singular noun (Rom. 7:14).



such as Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, and the Apostle Paul are included. Religious notables such as Mohammed, Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi, all the popes and patriarchs, as well as billions of other lesser known people are all born slaves. Regardless of anyone's status in the eyes of the world, everyone is born inside the slave market. Jesus informed the Pharisees of their bondage to sin.

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin is the slave of sin." (John 8:34)

"Commits" is a participle from the Greek verb ποιέω (*poieo*). When Jesus looked into the eyes of these self-righteous zealots and spoke using the dramatic present tense of *poieo*, He shocked these religious leaders: "You say you have never been in bondage to anyone? But I say that if you have committed sin (a first class conditional clause—and you have), you are a slave to sin."



FROM THE SLAVE MARKET TO ETERNAL LIFE

He then made another significant declaration:

“And the slave [unbeliever] does not remain in the house forever; the son [believer] does remain forever.” (John 8:35)

Slaves are not entitled to reside in their master’s house. We cannot live in the house if we are in the slave market. The “palace” in the diagram above represents eternal life. To reside forever in that house we must become “children of God” (John 1:12).

We are not born as children of God but born in slavery to sin. We cannot escape from slavery any more than we can help being born male or female. A slave has no rights or privileges, no assets or capital; he is helpless to free himself. If he is ever emancipated, someone who is already free must liberate him.

“If therefore the Son shall make you free [a first class conditional clause—and He does], you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

The point is elementary: Only a free man can purchase the freedom of someone in the slave market. Since the one person born into this world outside the slave market of sin was the humanity of Jesus Christ, He is the only free man who can redeem us forever. Any purchase, however, carries a price.

### *The Price of Redemption*

“But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed [פָּדָה, *padah*] you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk.” (Deut. 13:5a)

“I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud, and your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed [גָּאֵל, *gaal*] you.” (Isa. 44:22)

The word “redeem” means “to buy or to purchase.” God redeemed, *gaal*, in Isaiah 44:22 “by payment of value assessed.”<sup>14</sup> God purchased Israel from slavery both physically and spiritually. He ‘ransomed’ the Jews from slavery in Egypt (Deut. 13:5).<sup>15</sup> The physical freedom God procured for His chosen people in Egypt illustrates the spiritual freedom He would buy through the sacrifice of His Son. At the cross God “wiped out your transgressions.” He provided spiritual redemption not only for Israel but for all of us.

Who gave Himself as a ransom [λυτρόω, *lutroo*] for all, the testimony *borne* at the proper time. (1 Tim. 2:6)

Christ redeemed [ἀγοράζω, *agorazo*] us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us [*hyper* plus the genitive of advantage from *ego*, our substitute]—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE.” (Gal. 3:13)

These two Greek words in the New Testament, *lutroo* and *agorazo*, correspond to the Hebrew words *padah* and *gaal*. *Lutroo* and its compounds emphasize the idea of purchase or ransom by paying a price (Mark 10:45; Titus 2:14). *Agorazo* and its compounds mean “to redeem or purchase a slave’s freedom.”<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the word redeem carries a critical connotation with reference to the slave market of sin.

The Lord and no one else can redeem mankind. The price paid to redeem sinners from the slave market of sin was the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross. God the Father imputed to God the Son “the iniquity [sins] of us all” (Isa. 53:6b). Because Christ was judged for all the sins of mankind, redemption is available to the entire human race. Sins are no longer a barrier to our salvation. Now anyone can

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14. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), 145.

15. Ransom is the meaning of the Hebrew verb *padah* in Deuteronomy 13:5, which includes the ‘underlying idea of payment,’ even though no purchase price was set or paid to anyone. *Ibid.*, 804.

16. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 12.

receive the benefit of redemption—the forgiveness of all presalvation sins—through faith alone in Christ alone (Heb. 9:22).<sup>17</sup>

Hebrews 9:11–14, Revelation 1:5, and many other passages explain that Christ has already redeemed us. Job said, “I know that my Redeemer lives” (Job 19:25*b*). In Galatians 3:13 “the curse of the Law” refers to the Mosaic Law, the regulations that conclusively prove that every human being is a sinner. No one can keep every statute of the Mosaic code.

In Him [by whom] we have redemption through His blood [the saving work of Christ on the cross], [resulting in] the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace. (Eph. 1:7)

### *MONEY WILL NOT BUY REDEMPTION*

The means of your redemption is clarified in 1 Peter.

Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile [empty] way of life inherited from your forefathers. (1 Pet. 1:18)

“Knowing” should become your motto since knowledge of doctrine is the highest priority in the Christian life. God has made provision for every believer to know and understand every doctrine in the Word of God.<sup>18</sup> A believer cannot orient to the grace of God or advance to spiritual maturity apart from cognition of Bible doctrine. First Peter 1:18–19 mandates that the believer know the doctrine of redemption.<sup>19</sup>

First, a negative: We “were not redeemed with perishable things”—commodities that are not eternal. These are defined more specifically as “silver or gold,” legal tender in the ancient world.

Money will buy myriads of things, but money will not buy happiness, love, or friends. Above all, money will not buy salvation. Money

17. Presalvation sins are not forgiven at the cross but at the moment of salvation. Only the *penalty* of sin is removed once and for all at the cross. Christ’s substitutionary death accomplished redemption, but not forgiveness. See Thieme, *The Barrier*, 4–6.

Postsalvation sins are not forgiven at the cross but through the rebound technique. See Thieme, *Rebound and Keep Moving!*

18. Thieme, *The Trinity*, 35–39.

19. See Appendix A.

will not liberate anyone from the slave market of sin, nor will materialistic possessions free us from a worthless, futile life.

Several centuries of legalistic tradition had imposed upon Israel a system of salvation and spirituality by works that was in total conflict with both the Word of God and the grace policy of His plan.<sup>20</sup> Israel had a glorious heritage of grace from the Old Testament that had been corrupted by religion and legalism.

Second, a positive: Peter clearly states the ransom price for the purchase of our freedom.

But with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. (1 Pet. 1:19)

### *RITUAL REVEALS THE REALITY OF REDEMPTION*

The Jews who received this epistle understood explicitly the analogy Peter made between Jesus Christ and the outwardly perfect sacrificial lamb used in the Levitical offerings. This lamb was innocent and did not deserve to die. Yet, in accordance with Old Testament ritual, die it must.

“And he [the offerer] shall lay his hand on the head [identification] of his offering and slay it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood around on the altar.” (Lev. 3:2)

By placing his hand on the head of the lamb, the one who brought the sacrifice symbolically transferred his sins to the lamb. As the offerer killed the lamb and the priest collected and sprinkled the blood, people observed and learned the doctrine of redemption. The sacrifice foreshadowed and illustrated Christ’s future atonement for sins.<sup>21</sup> The blood of the lamb represented the price Christ would pay for our redemption from the slave market of sin.

All things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no [resulting] forgiveness. (Heb. 9:22b)

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20. Thieme, *The Barrier*, 22–25; *Giving: Gimmick or Grace?* (1990); *Rebound and Keep Moving!*

21. Atonement is all that is accomplished for our salvation by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Atonement includes redemption, reconciliation, and propitiation.

This ritual reveals an important principle: The work of Christ on the cross is revealed in every age (Titus 2:11).

The sacrifice of the lamb was a significant visual aid. Since the Messiah had not yet come, the lamb represented the Savior. Just as the innocent lamb bore sins symbolically, so the Lamb of God would one day pay the redemption price for all sins by His death (Isa. 53:7–11). The purchase price was not His literal blood, for He did not bleed to death on the cross, nor was it His physical death, since He finished the work of salvation *before* He died physically (John 19:30).<sup>22</sup> The purchase price of salvation was the blood of Jesus Christ—an analogy to His substitutionary spiritual death. In His spiritual death Christ was separated from and forsaken by the Father at the cross (Ps. 22:1; Mark 15:34) when He carried our sins (1 Pet. 2:24). His subsequent physical death marked the completion of His salvation work on the cross and was essential to His resurrection.

The lamb had to be “spotless” or perfect because in the analogy it represented Jesus Christ who was sinless. The perfect lamb symbolically bore sins in the Old Testament ritual. In the New Testament, the precious blood of Christ becomes a technical term referring to the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the entire human race.

“The Lamb of God” has redeemed or purchased freedom from sin (John 1:29). Jesus Christ has opened wide the doors of the slave market. But the volition of each slave must respond to the release. Slaves decide to leave or to remain in the slave market. When any slave chooses to leave by faith alone in Christ alone, he takes “refuge in Him.”

The LORD redeems the soul of His servants; and none of  
those who take refuge in Him will be condemned. (Ps. 34:22)

Salvation is free! Redemption is free! The reason salvation is free is because someone else paid the price. Someone had to pay.

### *The Open Door*

At some time in your life you have relied on a system of perception called faith. You may say, “I am a rationalist; I am an empiricist.”<sup>23</sup>

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22. See Appendix B; also Thieme, *The Blood of Christ*.

23. Thieme, *The Plan of God*, 2.

But you did not begin discovering the world through reason or experience. You began as a child using faith as your basic system of perception. You were told the sky is blue, the grass is green. A dog was a dog and a cat was a cat because someone identified them for you. Your teacher said, "There is a land called England." You had neither been there nor seen the country. You believed England existed because you trusted the authority and veracity of your teacher. You could have refused to believe her, but you did not. You accepted facts on faith. This is the way everyone begins the learning process, since faith is the basic system of perception.

By faith we accept or reject what the Bible teaches. By faith we accept or reject that Christ purchased our freedom from the slave market of sin, that the shackles of sin have been broken, and that the door to freedom is now open. We can believe these facts based on the authority and veracity of the infallible Word of God.

Even though Christ has opened the door, we may choose to exist in the slave market forever. Walking away from the slave market of sin takes an act of positive volition on our part: We leave by our own decision. That is why the Scripture says "believe." Salvation has been freely provided by Jesus Christ, but we must accept it by faith alone.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name. (John 1:12)

"I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (John 10:9)

Suppose a man observes a group of people living in a slave market whose shackles have all been removed. He informs them, "You are free. Go!" They answer, "Shackle us again. We do not want to leave!" So they remain in chains, just as so many unbelievers continue to be locked in the chains of negative volition.

Jesus Christ *is* the door to freedom from the slave market. Once we see that open door, all we do is move out from slavery. Frequently, there is confusion at this point. How many glowing testimonies have we heard by well-meaning but misguided Christians who wish to convey 'the experience' of the moment of salvation? The testimony usually includes a dramatic episode. The incident might be as follows: "There I was, bailing out of my aircraft after being shot down by

enemy ground fire. As the parachute opened my life flashed before my eyes. I remembered the Scripture my mother often quoted:

‘He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.’  
(John 3:18)

I said, ‘Oh God, I am believing in Christ.’ As I floated toward earth, I felt saved and knew I would survive the ordeal. I had such great peace of mind. I felt so wonderful!”

Another believer hearing this glorious experience might say, “Now wait just a minute. I trusted Christ, too, but I did not have such a spectacular experience. I did not *feel* wonderful. I had a hangover at the time, and afterward I felt no better. I must not really be saved because I did not feel what he felt.” And yet another believer may think, “When I believed in Christ I never had a rosy glow. I had no exciting experience. I was just sitting in church. Perhaps I am not really a Christian at all!”

Where does the Bible say that you must have a rosy glow, an emotional high, or a sensational experience to be saved? How you feel going through the door is unimportant; what is important is that you go through the door. Thrilling events are optional, never mandatory. Focus on what Christ has done. That is what counts. Christ picked up the tab at the cross. There is nothing left to do but accept His graciousness.

There is only one door, only one way to God (John 14:6). How we arrive at the door may differ, but we must all go through the door. We enter by faith alone in Jesus Christ. How we feel afterward may depend on our health, our personality, our economic status, or any number of factors. Salvation, however, depends on only one factor: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved” (Acts 16:31).

If we must feel wonderful or even different to be saved, then we would all need an emotional experience. But such is not the case. To depend on our emotions ignores the reality of Christ dying to free us. We can do nothing to gain our spiritual freedom. Christ did it all!

If a person were to receive the freedom of eternal life through emotionalism, then salvation would be limited to only those who could generate an emotional experience. However, if salvation is *unlimited*, open to all—which it is—then receiving salvation is open to all. The



key is faith, a possession of every member of the human race. Faith must have an object—Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ is all one needs to go through the door to eternal life.

### *One for All*

Let us examine this payment for sin called “unlimited atonement.”<sup>24</sup> A theological term, unlimited atonement simply means that Christ died as a substitute for the sins of every person—past, present, and future.

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died [as a substitute] for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. (2 Cor. 5:14–15)

Namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them. (2 Cor. 5:19a)

That Christ “died for all” is declared twice in verses 14 and 15. In a moment of time all the sins of every person who ever lived were borne by Jesus Christ: He carried them in His own body.

And He Himself bore [carried] our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. (1 Pet. 2:24)

Do not focus on the sins of anyone else at this time. Think only of your own sins. What sins have you committed in the past? How many sins are you committing right now? What sins will you practice in the future? Can you recall your first sin? If you are honest with yourself, you must admit to countless sins with no end in sight. You may reflect, “I have not committed that many sins. I am really a good person.” Perhaps you do not recognize what constitutes sin, but that does

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24. See Appendix C.

not let you off the hook.<sup>25</sup> The point is that every sin you will ever commit was borne by Christ as He hung on the cross.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame [of bearing sins]. (Heb. 12:2a)

*You* are the joy that was set before Christ. He personally paid for your sins. He did the same thing for every member of the human race. Second Peter 2:1 reveals that Christ even died for false teachers. Our Savior left no one out; the payment was complete. That is unlimited atonement.

And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

We have fixed our hope on the living God [Jesus Christ], who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. (1 Tim. 4:10b)

Unlimited atonement has a direct application to the life of all who accept the payment of Jesus Christ. When we walk out the door of the slave market by faith alone in Christ alone, we no longer need to be enslaved to the sin nature. The control of our life by the sin nature is defeated by the filling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18), the power source for the Christian life. We recover and maintain the filling of the Holy Spirit through naming our sins to God the Father (1 John 1:9).<sup>26</sup>

### *The Last Judgment*

In studying the description of this awesome judgment remember one thing: The word *sin* is never mentioned. Sin is never an issue in either salvation or the Last Judgment. Complete payment has been made for sin; Christ's substitutionary work removed the sin barrier between God and man. Unlimited atonement gives all mankind access to the benefits of Christ's redemption. Why, then, do so many refuse to step through the door to freedom from the sin nature and spiritual

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25. Thieme, *Rebound and Keep Moving!*, 15–17.

26. *Ibid.*, 12–13, 18–24.

death? They prefer to rely on their own good deeds rather than the grace of God. The biblical account of the Last Judgment illustrates their foolishness.

God's invitation to the entire human race is, "Leave the slave market of sin." How? By believing in Christ who paid the penalty for our sins and the sins of the entire world. Christ was our substitute; therefore, depend only on His work. Ultimately, every member of the human race faces this issue: Will you depend on the work of Christ—redemption and unlimited atonement—or will you depend upon your own human works, your good deeds?

Many people believe good deeds are the basis of salvation. This Satan-inspired lie has been perpetrated by all manner of confused people and religious organizations, including so-called evangelicals. You may have heard an evangelist preach about the Last Judgment, dramatically condemning a few conspicuous sins. He thunders, "You remember those wicked sins you have committed! God's going to call you to account!" There are grimaces and groans among the listeners and with a collective sigh they think, "I have had it!"

Nothing could be further from the truth! God will not mention the unbeliever's sins at the Last Judgment. The law of double jeopardy must be applied—you cannot be tried twice for the same crime. Since every sin has already been judged at the cross (1 Pet. 2:24), and since Christ will be the judge at the Last Judgment (John 5:22), He cannot mention that which has already been judged.

And I saw a great white throne and Him [Jesus Christ]  
who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven  
fled away, and no place was found for them. (Rev. 20:11)

In the Scripture white represents righteousness. In His first advent Christ, who never sinned personally, was judged for our sins. But at the great white throne He *is* the righteous Judge. The only people trying to escape from this judgment are unbelievers—people who never believed in Christ as Savior during their lifetime.<sup>27</sup> They will be resurrected to stand before Him in judgment.

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27. God guarantees that every member of the human race has equal opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. See Thieme, *Heathenism* (2001).

And I saw the dead [spiritually dead unbelievers], the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book [of a different kind] was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds [ἔργα, *erga*, “works”]. (Rev. 20:12)

At the judgment scene there will be two sets of books. One is the book of life, which includes the name of every person who has believed in Christ. The unique aspect of the book of life is that originally all members of the human race were listed. However, when anyone dies without believing in Christ as Savior, his name is blotted out (Ps. 69:28; Rev. 3:5; cf. 1 John 5:5). The second set of books is the book of works, volumes and volumes listing all the “deeds” or “works” of the unbelieving members of the human race.

Notice that the unbelievers who have been resurrected, called the “dead,” are judged according to their works, not according to their sins. In this context works does not connote personal sin because the sins of all humanity were imputed to Christ at the cross and have already been judged. Therefore, sins are never the basis for indictment at the Last Judgment. Condemnation of the unbeliever is based solely on human works, the only ‘good’ deeds left open for examination and judgment. Why? When an unbeliever rejects the work of Christ, he has only his good works to rely on as a substitute. These works can never measure up to God’s perfect righteousness.

For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment. (Isa. 64:6a)

### THE CASE OF CHARLIE BROWN

*Brown, C.*, is standing before the judge in heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ. The angelic clerk turns to the B’s in the book of life but finds that Charlie’s name has been blotted out; he died without believing in Christ as Savior. However, an impressive number of good works are recorded for Charlie in the book of works.

Charlie Brown was regarded as a successful businessman. Through hard work and shrewd management he had accumulated a fortune. He was good-hearted and philanthropic, giving large sums of money to

numerous charities, as well as supporting many other worthy causes. He never forgot the poor and needy. He joined a church and financed a new building. Charlie had been an outstanding leader of his community and succeeded in many benevolent endeavors. From the human viewpoint he was truly wonderful. His list of good works was long and remarkable.

One million two hundred seventy-five thousand three hundred and twenty-four good works are recorded in the book of works under the name of Charlie Brown. What an enviable account! Charlie had really worked hard! He had been a phenomenal do-gooder. In Charlie's thinking this tremendous accumulation of good deeds far outweighed any failures. Surely heaven will open wide and Charlie will be received with ruffles and flourishes.

Tragically for Charlie, all the good deeds in the world will not open the door to heaven.

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit [spiritual birth]. (Titus 3:5)


His ledger of 1,275,324 deeds all add up to man's relative righteousness, minus-R. His hard work had not canceled his debt with God; he still fell short of God's perfect righteousness, plus-R. If Charlie were to qualify to spend eternity with God, he must possess plus-R. Mankind can receive God's righteousness in only one way: by imputation at the moment he believes in Christ as Savior (1 Cor. 1:30).

For what does the Scripture say? "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED [imputed or credited] TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Rom. 4:3)

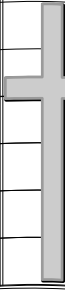
But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness. (Rom. 4:5)

For Charlie and every unbeliever at the Last Judgment of Christ it is too late. The transaction from slavery to freedom should have been handled during his lifetime.

This is the way Charlie’s balance sheet looks in the book of works compared to that of Joe Brown, a believer whose balance sheet remains in the book of life.

NAME	DEBITS		CREDITS	BALANCE
	SINS	GOOD WORKS		
Unbeliever		56 -R	None	Condemnation
BROWN, C. (Unbeliever)		1,275,324 -R	None	Condemnation
Unbeliever		8,430 -R	None	Condemnation
Unbeliever		2,345,776 -R	None	Condemnation
Unbeliever		3,456 -R	None	Condemnation
Unbeliever		3,232,554 -R	None	Condemnation

BOOK OF WORKS

NAME	DEBITS		CREDITS	BALANCE
	SINS	GOOD WORKS		
<del>BROWN, C. (Unbeliever)</del>		<del>1,275,324</del> <del>-R</del>	None	Condemnation
Believer		<del>2,183,443</del> <del>-R</del>	+R	SALVATION
BROWN, J. (Believer)		<del>2,183,443</del> <del>-R</del>	+R	SALVATION
<del>Unbeliever</del>		<del>1,000,481</del> <del>-R</del>	None	Condemnation
Believer		<del>418</del> <del>-R</del>	+R	SALVATION
Believer		<del>2,232,548</del> <del>-R</del>	+R	SALVATION

BOOK OF LIFE

Since Christ died as a substitute for all sins on the cross, sins have been removed from the debit column. Charlie's good works are also listed in the debit column. They still add up to minus-R. Minus-R can never have fellowship with the perfect righteousness of God. Charlie needs plus-R in the credit column. If Charlie had only believed in Christ by faith alone instead of rejecting Him, his account would have balanced. Charlie's ledger is in the red. He receives condemnation on the basis of his own good works.

No believer, including Joe Brown, will appear at the Last Judgment. Heaven will open to him based on the credit of plus-R at salvation recorded in the book of life. His human good works will be destroyed by fire at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:11–15).<sup>28</sup>

If evangelists and pastors are to be accurate they would have to say, "Every good deed that any unbeliever has ever done will be brought up at the Last Judgment to prove that, as good as they might have been, they are not good enough for God. The only work that opens the door of heaven is the work of Jesus Christ on the cross—redemption and unlimited atonement." The only righteousness that God accepts is His own righteousness, plus-R, imputed at the point of faith alone in Christ alone.

### *The Unpardonable Sin*

There is just one sin for which Christ could not die—it is not suicide; it is not calling your brother a fool (Matt. 5:22). *Rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior* is the one unpardonable sin. Christ could not die for the rejection of Himself. He is the only way to salvation, and ignoring Him dooms the unbeliever to eternal separation from God and eternal condemnation.

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28. Immediately following the resurrection (Rapture) of the Church, all believers of the Church Age are assembled in resurrection bodies for an evaluation of their lives on earth. Deeds of human good—wood, hay, straw—are destroyed by fire; deeds of divine good—gold, silver, precious stones—remain (1 Cor. 3:12). Divine good is accomplished by a believer filled with the Holy Spirit. Believers are rewarded in heaven based on divine good (1 Cor. 3:14).

“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)

Charlie Brown had committed the unpardonable sin. He will be resurrected with all unbelievers at the end of human history. After the Last Judgment comes his horrific punishment.

And the sea gave up the dead [unbelievers] which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged [Last Judgment], every one *of them* according to their deeds [*erga*, good works]. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:13–15)

For anyone who rejects Christ as Savior, his name will be blotted out of the book of life and he will be cast into the lake of fire forever.

Where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED. (Mark 9:48)

“And these [unbelievers] will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous [believers] into eternal life.” (Matt. 25:46)

“He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten [uniquely born] Son of God.” (John 3:18)

The primary precept discovered from our examination of the Last Judgment is: The only sin for which an unbeliever receives eternal judgment is the unpardonable sin—rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior. Personal sins are never an issue; they were settled at the cross.



## THE PENALTY OF SIN RESOLVED

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 6:23)

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned. (Rom. 5:12)

There is a way *which seems* right to a man, but its end is the way of death. (Prov. 14:12)

When “death” is mentioned, undoubtedly you think of physical death; however, physical death is not the penalty of sin.

“But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die [literally, “dying you will die”].” (Gen. 2:17)

If the penalty of sin had been physical death, then Adam and Eve would have died physically at the moment they ate of the fruit in the Garden. We know from Scripture (Gen. 3:6—5:5) that they lived many years after their original disobedience. The penalty, therefore, was far worse—spiritual death. Adam and Eve were no longer capable of having fellowship with the Lord.

When the Lord appeared in the Garden after Adam and Eve ate the fruit, they hid themselves. God in His grace broke the silence and called to them, “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9). Of course, God knew exactly where they were—He is omniscient. God asked the question because He wanted Adam and Eve to understand why they were where they were.

Adam spoke right up, foolishly placing the blame. “Well, God, it’s all Your fault. You gave me the woman and she gave me the fruit; so, it’s Your fault and her fault” (Gen. 3:12). Adam was trying to avoid responsibility for his own decision by ‘passing the buck.’ Then the Lord turned to the woman who complained, “This is not really my fault; it is this pet You gave me—the serpent” (v. 13). As you can see, passing the buck is not a modern innovation. But Adam and Eve were going to find that they were responsible to the Lord for their decision (Gen. 3:16–19).

Adam and Eve were at that moment spiritually dead because of their sin of disobedience. Eventually they would die physically. However, God in His grace would provide the means for them to be regenerated or ‘born again’ during their lifetime. Born again is spiritual birth, synonymous with salvation by faith alone in Christ alone resulting in eternal life. Genesis 3:15 prophesies the coming Savior, the way of Adam and Eve’s salvation. Psalm 22 explains how Christ would pay the penalty of sin and remove the issue of man’s spiritual death.

### *The Sufferings of Payment*

My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. (Ps. 22:1)

Jesus Christ uttered these words on the cross (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34). He quoted this Scripture for our benefit. Jesus knew perfectly well why the Father was forsaking Him. The Father forsook Him so the sins of mankind could be imputed to Him and judged on the cross. This fulfilled the purpose for which He had been born into this world. So horrible was this judgment to the sinless humanity of Christ that He expressed His agony by repeating again and again this psalm of David. The Hebrew word for “groaning,” שָׁעָה (sheagah), indicates our Lord was screaming from the pain of divine judgment.

To appreciate why Jesus Christ was screaming, we must clarify what had happened to our Lord prior to His agony on Golgotha (“the skull,” the place of death). Jesus had just endured six unjust trials.<sup>29</sup> Men had deliberately lied about Him and yet Jesus Christ remained silent. He did not refute the phony charges (1 Pet. 2:23). When the court completed taking the testimony, an indictment could not be pursued because the false witnesses did not agree.

However, the hatred toward the perfect God-man was overwhelming. Members of the court took turns slugging, cursing, reviling, and spitting on Him (Matt. 26:67; Mark 14:65). Jesus Christ was hit dozens and dozens of times. Isaiah 52:14 tells us that He would be so badly beaten that the features of His face would become unrecognizable.

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29. Thieme, *King of Kings and Lord of Lords* (2004), 1–27.

Later, the Romans stripped Him to the waist, tied His hands above His head, and scourged Him, literally skinned Him alive with a whip. The Roman soldiers used a *mastix*, a lash to which they attached sharp bits of bone, metal, and splinters—anything that would cut.

Despite the horrors of this brutal and unjust treatment, Jesus Christ never uttered a sound, never raised His voice to scream in pain, never succumbed to incoherent hysteria. “Like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth” (Isa. 53:7b; cf. Acts 8:32). After the beatings, as was the Roman custom, they rubbed salt into the raw and bloody back of Jesus to cauterize the wound. They continued to mock Him (Mark 15:17–22); they took Him to the place of death and nailed Him to the cross.

As He hung upon the cross, the pain was excruciating. His bones slowly began separating at the joints. He was inexorably suffocating from the sagging weight of His own body. Here was the epitome of torture. Yet not once did He cry out—not until midday when the sun was overhead. Suddenly the hill was enshrouded in divine darkness (Mark 15:33). Under that concealment, screams poured from the mouth of Jesus. None of the previous punching, slapping, lying, torture, or pain had caused Him to cry out.

Why, after Christ silently endured hours of torture, did He finally succumb to screaming at this moment? What unimaginable revulsion made Him scream? Your sins, my sins, and the past, present, and future sins of the entire world were poured out on Him. Here was the untold agony that precipitated His shrieks. God the Father forsook Him. Jesus lost fellowship with the Father and died spiritually. Why? Because “Thou art holy” (Ps. 22:3).

The holiness of God combines His righteousness and justice. God’s righteousness demanded the separation between Himself and the sins imputed to Christ. God the Father directed His perfect justice toward Christ, imputing all human sins to Him and judging Him as the substitute for mankind.

He [God the Father] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf [as our substitute], that we might become the righteousness of God in Him [when we believe in Christ]. (2 Cor. 5:21)

In Psalm 22:6 Christ says, “But I am a worm.” There are several Hebrew terms for worm, but this word תולעת (*tolaat*) has an explicit connotation. The blood of the *tolaat* was gathered for making the crimson dye of the ancient world. The robes of kings were stained with this rare and valuable pigment. Psalm 22:6 pictures Jesus Christ as the worm, crushed on the cross by our sins. As a result of His being crushed, we who believe will wear the robes of kings. The resurrected Jesus Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16) and believers will share His kingship forever (2 Tim. 2:11–12).

The first six verses of Psalm 22 constitute a picture of Christ’s work on the cross that canceled the debt for the penalty of sin. This is called expiation. Christ died spiritually—was separated from and forsaken by the Father—that you and I might never be separated from God again. Another passage on expiation is found in the New Testament:

Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us *and* which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.  
(Col. 2:14)

One of the most significant metaphors in the Bible is “having canceled out the certificate of debt.” The Greek word “certificate of debt,” χειρόγραφον (*cheirographon*), is a legal term for financial obligation. God has removed our obligation. The question is, what do we owe God as members of the human race? We owe Him perfect righteousness, absolute righteousness, plus-R. Can we pay it? No! We can never meet that obligation. Our assets are always lacking. We are in the slave market of sin, finding ourselves in the same situation as Charlie Brown. One million plus good deeds are not enough. They add up to minus-R, and minus-R cannot pay off our debt.

Someone must pay; expiation must take place. Verse 14 says, literally, “Having once and for all canceled the debt.” I translated the phrase “once and for all” since the Greek aorist participle ἐξαλείψας (*exaleipsas*) represents a point of time that is perpetuated as a continuing action. The historic event of the cross occurred approximately A.D. 30, but its efficacy extends to everyone regardless of the time in which they live.

“Has taken” is in the perfect tense. Christ took the penalty of sin out of the way in the past with the result that our debt has been permanently removed. God canceled the debt by nailing it to His cross.

## CHRIST REMOVED THE BARRIER

Man is on one side of the barrier and God is on the other. Man cannot be freed from the slave market of sin without God removing the barrier.<sup>30</sup> Let us think of the barrier as composed of six bricks.

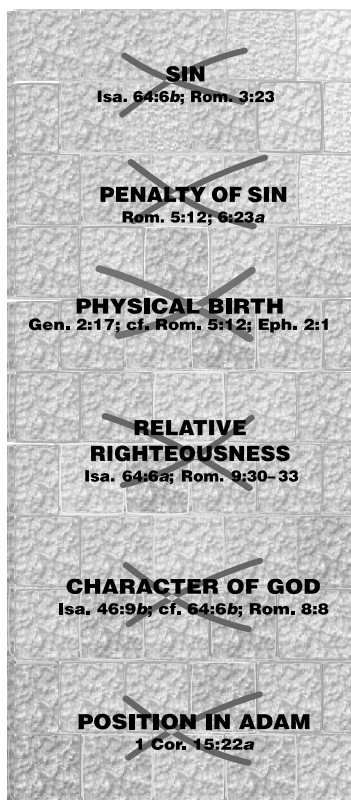
1. The first brick in the barrier, *sin*, has been removed by redemption and unlimited atonement.
2. The second brick, the *penalty of sin*, has been removed by expiation.
3. *Physical birth*. Man is born physically alive but spiritually dead, separated from and unable to have fellowship with God. “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1).
4. *Man’s relative righteousness*. No matter how good man may be, his human righteousness is completely unacceptable to God. “For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment” (Isa. 64:6a).
5. *Character of God*, His divine essence. Man can never measure up to the divine attributes of perfect God. No one is as good as God. “THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE” (Rom. 3:12b).
6. *Man’s position in Adam*. “For as in Adam all die” (1 Cor. 15:22a). Adam’s fall and subsequent spiritual death not only disqualified all humanity from fellowship with God, but also limited the physical life span of the human race.

These bricks are removed by the work of Christ on the cross. Therefore, only our attitude toward Christ determines our eternal future. There is nothing *we* can do to influence or determine that future. Christ alone has freed us from the slave market of sin.

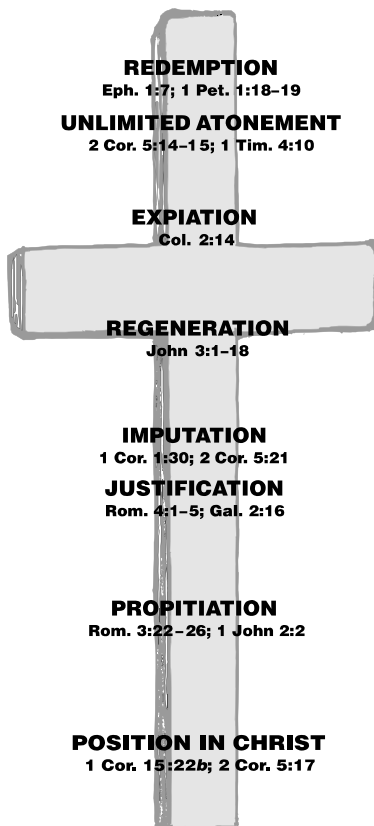
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30. Thieme, *The Barrier*.

## **THE BARRIER** **THE PROBLEMS:**



## **WORK OF CHRIST** **THE SOLUTIONS:**



But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us [as our substitute]. (Rom. 5:8)

Every human being has been purchased from the slave market at a great price—the death of Christ. Each of us must use our volition to accept or reject the free gift of Christ. One faith decision and we walk

out the door of the slave market as a member of the family of God forever (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26).

## LIBERTY AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

After salvation our decisions are not over. The Christian life is a series of decisions. As believers we can utilize our freedom in positive or negative ways. Positive volition toward biblical truth is a good decision, which results in spiritual growth through consistently hearing, learning, and applying Bible doctrine to our lives. Negative volition toward biblical truth is a bad decision, which results in consistent carnality, control of the soul by the sin nature, and reversionism—the destruction of the Christian life.<sup>31</sup>

Today, millions of Christians are indifferent or negative to the Word of God. They never understand or operate on divine viewpoint, the ability to think and make decisions from a solid foundation of Bible doctrine. These believers consider only human viewpoint and are susceptible to numerous false doctrines and heresies. Although they have avoided the penalty of sin through faith in Christ, little of their lives is spent filled with the Holy Spirit or learning Bible doctrine. They remain immature Christians, “babes in Christ” (1 Cor. 3:1).

On the one hand, the most miserable people in the world are Christians who choose to neglect doctrine and do not grow spiritually. On the other hand, the happiest and most stable people in the world are also Christians—those who make the positive decision to “abide in My word” (John 8:31). They consistently desire to know the truth.

“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)

This verse is boldly emblazoned on the most prominent building of the University of Texas at Austin, The Tower. However, John 8:32 does not allude to academic achievement or philosophical knowledge. These pursuits, although admirable, do not truly liberate. Truth is a reference to the perfect standards of the Word of God. Jesus identifies truth as the Bible doctrine connected with phase two of the divine

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31. Thieme, *God the Holy Spirit vs. The Sin Nature* (2013), 21–27; Thieme, *Reversionism* (2000).

plan—the source of divine viewpoint for the believer in time. Knowledge of Bible doctrine and the filling of the Holy Spirit increasingly liberate the believer from the control of the sin nature and consistently expand his spiritual freedom to serve the Lord. Christ has set us free so that we may utilize our freedom to advance to spiritual maturity and to glorify Him.

It was for freedom that Christ set us free [from the slave market of sin]; therefore [believer] keep standing firm [spiritual growth through Bible doctrine] and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery [the bondage of the sin nature in carnality and reversionism]. (Gal. 5:1)



## *Appendix A*

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# THE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION

### I. Etymology of redemption

A. A compound Greek word ἀντίλυτρον (*antilutron*), meaning “the substitution of money for a slave or a prisoner,” hence, payment for the slave or prisoner in order to set free, translated “ransom.”

B. Cognate words are:

1. λυτρωτής (*lutrotes*)—redeemer, deliverer;
2. λύτρωσις (*lutrosis*)—redemption, deliverance;
3. λυτρόω (*lutroo*)—to release for a ransom, to redeem;
4. ἀγοράζω (*agorazo*)—to redeem, to buy;
5. ἐξαγοράζω (*exagorazo*)—to redeem, to purchase from a slave market, to set free.

II. Definition: The saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross whereby every human being is purchased from the slave market of sin (1 Pet. 1:18–19). Christ paid the price of redemption through His substitutionary spiritual death: “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross” (1 Pet. 2:24a). Redemption is realized when a person expresses faith alone in Christ alone.

- III. Jesus Christ is the only qualified Redeemer (Heb. 1:3):
  - A. By the virgin birth (Matt. 1:23; 1 Tim. 3:16);
  - B. By the impeccability of His humanity (Isa. 53:9; John 8:46; 19:4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26–28).
- IV. Jesus Christ exhibited positive volition during the Incarnation.
  - A. The redemptive work of Christ on the cross was an act of His own free will (Luke 22:42).
  - B. Christ was obedient to the Father’s plan (Rom. 5:19; Phil. 2:8).
- V. Animal blood was the means of teaching the doctrine of redemption in the Old Testament (Ex. 12:7, 12–13; Heb. 9:22).
- VI. The blood of Christ is the ransom money or purchase price of redemption (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14).
  - A. It is the “coin of the realm” (1 Pet. 1:18–19) by which the purchase was made.
  - B. It depicts by representative analogy the saving work of Christ on the cross, His spiritual death, in which He was judged for our sins (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24).
- VII. The soul of the believer is redeemed in salvation (Job 19:25–26).
- VIII. Condemnation by the Mosaic Law is resolved by redemption (Gal. 3:10, 13).
- IX. Results of redemption:
  - A. Forgiveness of sins (Isa. 44:22; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12–15).
  - B. Basis for justification (Rom. 3:24).
  - C. Basis for sanctification (Eph. 5:25–27).
  - D. Basis for eternal inheritance of believer (Heb. 9:15).
  - E. Basis for strategic victory of Christ in the angelic conflict (Col. 2:14–15; Heb. 2:14–15).
  - F. Redemption of the soul in salvation leads to redemption of the body in resurrection (Eph. 1:14).
  - G. Redemption of the body is the ultimate status of the royal family of God forever (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 4:30).
- X. Redemption is related to the mediatorship of Christ (1 Tim. 2:5–6; Heb. 9:14–15).

## *Appendix B*

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# THE DOCTRINE OF THE BLOOD

- I. Animal blood defined
  - A. Blood is the seat of animal life (Lev. 17:10–14).
  - B. In the Old Testament shadow worship, the blood of animals was used to represent redemption, the saving work of Christ on the cross (Heb. 9:18–22).
  - C. From the garments of skin in Genesis 3:21 to the Levitical offerings of Leviticus 1—5, animal blood was used to represent the figurative blood of Christ.
- II. Animal blood as a representative analogy
  - A. While the animal blood was real and literal, it does not represent the literal blood of Christ shed on the cross. Christ did not die by bleeding to death. The animal blood represents the spiritual death of Christ on the cross (Col. 1:20; Heb. 10:19; 13:20; 1 Pet. 1:2).
  - B. A real analogy would be a literal death compared to a literal death.
  - C. In a real analogy, the physical death of the animal would be compared to the physical death of Christ.

- D. Therefore, animal sacrifice is a representative analogy in which the physical death of the animal on the altar represents the spiritual death of Christ on the cross.
- E. The analogy requires that the blood of Christ be taken figuratively.
- III. The physical death of Christ
  - A. The physical death of Christ on the cross occurred by an act of His own volition, not from bleeding to death (John 10:18).
  - B. After His work on the cross was finished, Christ exhaled His last breath in which He uttered the words of Psalm 31:5 and Luke 23:46.
  - C. Having exhaled this last sentence, Christ did not inhale again (Matt. 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30).
  - D. Christ had already completed His salvation work for us when He died physically.
  - E. Therefore, the blood of Christ is part of a representative analogy between the physical death of the animal sacrifice and the spiritual death of Christ when He was bearing our sins on the cross (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24).
- IV. The blood of animal sacrifices was a shadow pointing to the reality of the cross (Heb. 9:12–24).
- V. The blood of Christ depicts the saving work of Christ on the cross through four doctrines of soteriology:
  - A. Expiation (Rev. 1:5)
  - B. Redemption (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12; 1 Pet. 1:18–19)
  - C. Justification (Rom. 5:9)
  - D. Sanctification (Heb. 13:12)
- VI. The blood of Christ in expiation is the basis for the rebound technique:
  - A. Sin offering (Lev. 4)—rebound with emphasis on the unknown sins of the believer
  - B. Trespass offering (Lev. 5; 6:7)—rebound with emphasis on the known sins of the believer
  - C. New Testament counterpart (1 John 1:7, 9)
- VII. The true meaning of the blood of Christ is set forth in the directions of the doctrines of soteriology:
  - A. Redemption—inward
  - B. Reconciliation—manward
  - C. Propitiation—Godward

- D. Sin has estranged the two parties—God and man. The mediator (Heb. 9:15) solves the sin problem by redemption. As the Savior, Jesus Christ reconciles man and propitiates God.
- E. Therefore, the blood of Christ is analogous to redemption, reconciliation, and propitiation.

## *Appendix C*

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# THE DOCTRINE OF UNLIMITED ATONEMENT

- I. Definition
  - A. The efficacious work of Christ on the cross on behalf of mankind.
  - B. Atonement as a noun means reconciliation after enmity or controversy, and includes satisfaction or reparation made for wrong or injury.
  - C. The verb has several related meanings, such as “to be at one, to be in accordance, to make reparation or amends, to make up for errors or deficiencies, to reconcile.”
  - D. In the Old Testament, the meaning of atonement is related to the Hebrew verb **כָּפַר** (*kaphar*), “to pass over, to cover.”
- II. In Old Testament times, animal sacrifices were used to cover for sin.
  - A. Animal sacrifices represented the propitiation of God the Father by the judgment of Christ who covered or took away our sins by His spiritual death on the cross (Ps. 103:3; John 1:29) and thereby established reconciliation between man and God (Col. 1:20–21).

- B. Therefore, atonement in the Old Testament refers to the use of animal sacrifices to represent the saving work of Christ. Animal sacrifices could not truly atone for sins.
- C. The two concepts of atonement (Old and New Testaments) are brought together in Romans 3:23–26.
- III. Atonement is unlimited.
  - A. When Christ was judged on the cross for sins, He paid for the sins of the entire human race—not just for the elect (Rom. 5:6; 2 Cor. 5:14–15, 19; 1 Tim. 2:6; 4:10; Titus 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2).
  - B. ‘Limited atonement,’ the theological concept that Christ died only for believers, contradicts Scripture.
- IV. Unlimited atonement eliminates sin from the unbeliever’s indictment at the Last Judgment.
  - A. When Christ died as a substitute on the cross, He was judged for all sins of the human race.
  - B. At the cross, human good was rejected to be judged later.
  - C. Human good will be part of the unbeliever’s indictment at the Last Judgment (Rev. 20:12–15).
  - D. Since sins have been judged at the cross, under the law of double jeopardy they cannot be mentioned at the Last Judgment.
  - E. Unlimited atonement covers sins only.
- V. The unbeliever is indicted at the Last Judgment because he did not believe in Christ while on earth (John 3:18, 36).

## *Glossary*

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**Adam's original sin** Disobedience to God's mandate in the Garden of Eden. Adam ate the forbidden fruit resulting in spiritual death. Consequently, Adam's corrupt nature (see **sin nature**) and spiritual death were passed to all mankind (see **spiritual death**).

**divine decree** The eternal, holy, wise, and sovereign purpose of God, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes, courses, conditions, successions, and relations, and determining their certain futurity.

**expiation** That aspect of Christ's work on the cross that canceled the debt for the penalty of sin. The penalty of sin is spiritual death.

**Rapture** The resurrection of all dead Church Age believers and the removal of all living believers from the earth at the end of the Church Age immediately before the Tribulation begins.

**redemption** The saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross whereby every human being is purchased from the slave market of sin and delivered to the freedom of grace. Redemption is realized when a person is born again by faith alone in Christ alone.



**relative righteousness** Man's standards, adequate only in comparison or relative to other humans but totally inadequate when compared to God's absolute or perfect standards.

**sin** Any mental, verbal, or overt activity that violates the character and standards of God.

**sin nature** An integral part of every human being that resides in the cell structure of the human body. The sin nature was acquired originally by Adam at his fall and is subsequently passed down genetically to all mankind through procreation. The consequences are spiritual death and total depravity of all humanity, except Jesus Christ. The sin nature is composed of an area of strength, an area of weakness, trends toward legalism or antinomianism, and lust patterns.

**spiritual death** Separation from God. The imputation of the penalty of Adam's original sin to the genetically formed sin nature at birth results in each person being born physically alive but spiritually dead.

**unlimited atonement** The judgment of Christ on the cross for the sins of the entire human race.



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